



SITUATION REPORT #127



INCIDENT NAME: Walla Walla County COVID-19 UNIFIED COMMAND

DATE: November 23, 2020	TIME: 14:00 Information is updated at 2pm daily	MISSION #20-0265
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AFFECTED AREA: Walla Walla, Washington

CURRENT SITUATION: COVID-19 Surveillance, Monitoring & Case Investigation/Contact Tracing

2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak (COVID-19) Walla Walla County Residents - Regional Healthcare by Providence St. Mary Medical Center	Number
Confirmed Cases	2045
Recovered	1524
Deaths	18
2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak (COVID-19) Out-of-County Residents – Regional Healthcare by Providence St. Mary Medical Center	
Confirmed Cases	3
Tests Submitted –	Number
Total Negative Results (Walla Walla County)	30,095
Confirmed Cases by Community of Residence	Number
Burbank/Wallula	118
College Place	294
Dixie	7
Prescott	47
Touchet/Lowden	35
Waitsburg	18
Walla Walla	1526
TOTAL	2045



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Confirmed Cases by Age	Number
Under 20	270
20-39	807
40-59	597
60-79	264
Over 80	107
Confirmed Cases by Gender	Number
Female	966
Male	1079
TOTAL	2045

REGION 8 PHEPR:

Region 8 PHEPR staff is supporting WWCDCH from their EOC. Next call scheduled for 11/25 3:00-4:00

COMMUNITY MITIGATION MEASURES:

DCH in contact with positive cases, all close contacts on home isolation under daily symptom watch.

- DCH working with businesses and Long-term Care facilities on containment of outbreaks which includes testing, contact tracing and educational information
- DCH and Providence agreement signed to provide isolation and quarantine facilities
- DCH has 800 doses of annual Flu Vaccine for all residents
- DCH attending Covid Vaccine planning meetings with DOH and Providence
- DCH 'Health Space' and CREST training completed for health data management
- DCH and BMAC continue to coordinate community mask distributions
- DCH increased staff capacity for case monitoring and contact tracing to be in compliance with variance applications
- DCH continues work surrounding behavioral health (mental health, substance use) and the coronavirus
- Providence Urgent Care Drive-thru testing operational for those with between 7am-6pm daily
- Walla Walla County Unified Command holding Key Stakeholder calls at 9 am Monday and Thursday
- DCH CD call flu, respiratory illness, COVID-19; next call will be Tuesday, November 24th
- DCH attending M-W-F DOH-Epi to Epi call for LHJ's
- DCH WIC Nutrition benefits continuing to ensure food security for families; completed by telephone consulting and online benefit issuance

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

- The Walla Walla County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has downgraded to Level 2, Limited Operations, effective 05/28/2020 as of 0800.



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- As of 03/24/2020 Walla Walla County Emergency Management continues to work remotely in order to limit exposure that might affect 911 and dispatch personnel who share the facility.
- The Walla Walla County Commissioners signed a Declaration of Emergency, effective 3/13/20 at 2 PM.
- The City of Walla Walla signed a Declaration of Emergency, effective 3/17/20, extended on 4/8/20.
- The City of College Place signed a Declaration of Emergency, effective 3/17/20, extended 6/9/20.
- The City of Waitsburg signed a Declaration of Emergency, effective 3/18/20.
- The Port of Walla Walla signed a Declaration of Emergency, effective 3/19/20, extended 5/28/20.
- The City of Prescott signed a Declaration of Emergency Effective 3/19/20.
- Walla Walla County remains in modified operations/access during regular business to certain county departments.
- Remains in a Unified Command with Walla Walla County Department of Community Health. Unified Command was established 3/13/20 at 2 PM.
- Washington State Emergency Management is now requesting that all Tier 1 priorities be consolidated into a single order. Long Term Care facilities are now considered to be part of the Tier 1 priority, with further changes expected. Tier 2-4 priorities will be consolidated in a 2nd request. Next request period will be for the week beginning 11/30/2020
- PPE tier allocation is changed beginning June 5, 2020, to allow Tier 1 requestors to build on hand supplies to levels sufficient for 14-21 days.

1. Outstanding Resource Requests

WA State Tracking Number	Request Date	Agency	Current Status
WA-2020111616326	11/16/20	Tier 1 Consolidated PPE request	Delivered

November 23, 2020

2. Effective Strategies and Successes

- Walla Walla County Department of Community Health (DCH) meetings with LTC/ALF/SNF community to stay connected and updated with open dialogue on COVID-19 status in WW Valley.
- Local Health Officer, Prosecuting Attorney and Local Emergency Response Coordinator completing Voluntary and Involuntary Isolation Orders specific to COVID-19.
- Maintain contact with media to keep the public informed.
- Unified Command calls providing regular communication and collaboration.
- Frequent messaging on Facebook, including Spanish-language posts.
- Providence St Mary Medical Center (PSMMC) Population Health team monitoring PUIs and cases, their awareness of community happenings.



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- Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC) food bank distribution in collaboration with Washington National Guard (WNG).
- Southgate Campus Acute Care wing setup.
- Addressing homeless needs for isolation and quarantine during pandemic.
- DCH Environmental Health team consults for prevention planning for essential businesses.
- Controlled access to WalMart, Home Depot, Albertson's and Safeway.
- Procurement of PPE from Washington State Department of Corrections.
- Continued partnership with WNG.
- DCH virtual meetings with LTC/ALF/SNF community to stay connected and updated with open dialogue on COVID-19 status in WW Valley.
- Proactive work on PSA's and infographics with digital marketing company.
- Solid protocol established between Coroner's Office and PSMMC.
- Tyson compliance with DCH/L&I Essential Business Guidelines and testing of employees.
- Delivery of PPE supplies and test kits from UAC SEOC has enabled us to provide much needed protection to our whole community.
- Experience with annual flu immunization clinics and long history of working together gave us the ability to quickly put together a team for testing at the Tyson Plan. 1,290 Tyson employees tested with staff from PSMMC & DCH.
- Aggressive testing at long-term care facilities.
- Spanish-language PSA's on local Spanish-language radio stations.
- Approval of additional DCH positions and increased hours by the Board of County Commissioners.
- Media specific email and phone number established, the centralized PIO email/phone number is working well and is helping with coordination of interviews.
- Protocols developed by PSMMC to do surgeries for most compelling cases that were delayed.
- Volunteer staffing at DCH.
- DCH/PSMMC/Coroner/Consulate's Office worked together to support a local family with international funeral arrangements.
- PSMMC has done a great job of allocating resources, workers, and supplies for the patients under investigation awaiting results.
- DCH conversations with school districts on distance learning strategies and graduation planning.
- PSMMC tabletop exercise for activation of PSMMC's auxiliary hospital; well attended by community partners.
- Formation of business/economy reopening workgroup. Workgroup team meetings including townhall Q&A with local businesses; webinars to help educate businesses. Continued frequent meetings of the workgroup. Use of Chamber of Commerce website for posting documentation/guidance.
- Tour of PSMMC Alternate Care site, DCH isolation and quarantine sites, and Park Manor by DOH Med Surge Branch.
- DCYF, Whitman, and DCH debrief on activation of isolation and quarantine for Master's Ranch – West juveniles; successful collaboration.
- Approval of WWEM part-time temp position for logistics by the Board of County Commissioners.
- 1 nurse and 1 disease investigator on staff over the weekend as cases come in over the weekend.



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- All of our cases to date are from a known exposure; we're not seeing community spread.
- Arrival of first delivery of masks for low-income population in time for Governor's face mask mandate (36,000 masks). Rapid distribution by Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC) to nearly 30 agencies and on 6/30/20 at 4 locations in the community.
- With the assistance of DCH, PSMMC received Remdesivir.
- Reopening workgroup recommendation – though no longer required for businesses, a contact log is a good practice.
- Having COVID safety plans in place at businesses benefits successful response to positive employees, as seen recently at a local restaurant.
- City of College Place Hand sanitizer and mask drive-through distribution on 7/7/20 (300 vehicles) 7/9/20 (400 vehicles), and 8/25/20. Handout at their booth at Thursday Farmers Market.
- Meeting on 7/8/20 with DCH/WWEM/USFS/DNR to discuss preplanning for COVID testing, isolation and quarantine.
- Al fresco dining in Downtown Walla Walla and College Place are working well.
- CEPHEID rapid testing machine is now being fully utilized by PSMMC at full capacity.
- Planning for isolation and quarantine of wildland firefighters with use of space at Walla Walla Community College.
- DCH work with large Oregon employer to coordinate cases with Umatilla County; providing education and resources (Health Fair) for employees.
- Hand washing stations at several locations in Downtown Walla Walla.
- [Washington National Guard Title 32 extension through Christmas](#). WNG remain critical to local food bank operations.
- DCH received 36K cloth masks from GCACH (also received 24K KN95s) in August; giving them out at health fairs.
- Highest number of COVID patients at PSMMC since the beginning of the pandemic on 8/11/20, and yet the hospital wasn't overwhelmed.
- Health Fairs: Smith Frozen Foods (August 6), First Fruits (August 12), Tyson Fresh Meats (August 20), Valle Lindo Homes (August 27), Walla Walla River Packing (August 28), & Kiska Farms (September 1), education, masks, hand sanitizer and CDC fliers (Spanish and English) distributed with team from PSMMC & DCH.
- DCH agreement with Whitman College to use North Hall for isolation and quarantine extended until 10/31.
- DCH/Providence/FMC/WWC have aligned their response for population asking for medical note to not wear a mask (exception to required mask wearing); consistent info/guidance that they are not providing notes to patients.
- Community Roundtable discussions for school reopening planning (Cities of Walla Walla, College Place & Waitsburg); looking at effects on workplace, childcare, behavioral health held during the week of August 17 were well attended
- Department of Commerce Shelter Grant approved for the Sleep Center and purchase of a mobile unit to provide support around the county (2 or 3-year grant).
- 'Testing for Heroes' at PSMMC; employee and first responder antibody testing, initial figures show 60% participation by PSMMC employees.



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- City of College Place door-to-door distribution of masks and disinfectant to businesses with the assistance of Chamber of Commerce.
- Slow trend downward in cases.
- Utilization of WNG for filling WEBEOC request for LTC weekly testing to comply with CMS guidelines.
- Work with Providence on future isolation & quarantine options.
- Whitman College success with students following mask wearing guidelines.
- [Veteran's Stand Down](#) on September 26th at VA Hospital.
- Whitman College extending agreement for use of North Hall for isolation and quarantine to the end of November.
- LTC reporting that WNG has provided 'amazing support' for COVID testing to meet CMS requirements.
- DCH has seen positive feedback on Facebook to posting of Halloween guidance.
- Today's report of 3% positivity rate; first time below 5% since July.
- Protocols for following positive antigen tests with PCR testing to confirm at LTC facilities.
- Drive thru flu vaccination clinic at Walla Walla High School on 10/14 for 5 – 18-year old students.
- Walla Walla County sales tax revenue for 2020 is unexpectedly greater than the same time last year. Good news for the budget.
- PSMMC/DCH drive through flu clinic on October 24. All doses were given out. (500 foundation, 35 DCH). Good turnout. Very favorable feedback from observers. Opportunity to examine logistics if location were used for COVID vaccination.
- DCH and PSMMC went to First Fruits on October 28th to administer 60 doses of flu vaccine. Because of the weather, some employees were out in the fields working and unavailable for vaccination. Despite this it was a good turn out and many reported receiving the flu shot for the first time this year.
- DCH webpage is now fully online and available to public, www.covidwwc.com/. The website offers dual-language accessibility with pages dedicated to Spanish language content.
- DCH Facebook in Spanish language is now fully operational: www.facebook.com/WWCDCHespanol
- DCH, LTC facilities, clinics and the hospital are maintaining great lines of communication in order to help manage patient care and avoid overwhelming the hospital.
- DCH was able to obtain BinaxNow test kits.
- Distribution of county funds/grants to local businesses.
- Family Medical Center Flu Clinic, November 2nd to November 5th, gave out 173 flu shots.
- SEOC did a great job filling WWEM's emergent PAPER order; very quick turnaround.
- LTC facilities have been able to take patients back to decompress impact of COVID on PSMMC (hospital).
- Increased hours at PSMMC testing site have improved traffic flow.
- DCH/LTC/PSMMC call on patient transfer protocols has helped keep the numbers down for patients going to the hospital.
- WNG mission extended through March 15, 2021 for foodbank distribution assistance.
- Local LTC's mitigation strategies have worked to reduce COVID cases.

3. Risks and challenges

- COVID-19 Cases
 - Total Confirmed Cases: 2045
 - ❖ Recovered: 1524



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❖ Active: 503

- Home Isolation: 492

- Hospitalized: 14 (11 are Walla Walla County residents, 3 are Out of County residents)

❖ Deaths: 18

- Washington State Penitentiary (included in numbers above): 218 incarcerated (61 active) and 18 staff (3 active), recent inmate COVID-19 related death under investigation (already being reported by media)
- Positivity rate for last week 11/7 – 11/13 15%
- 2nd highest rate of disease in the State
- Concern for rapid spread at congregated facilities.
- Cross-jurisdictional coordination with Umatilla County, OR, Benton/Franklin County, WA.
- Need to continue to monitor for behavioral health issues.
- Case investigation slowed by contacts not answering phone calls from DCH.
- Cold/flu season; respiratory symptoms may be confused with COVID and require workers to stay home.
- Highly complicated processes for storage and administration of Pfizer COVID vaccine.
- 'COVID fatigue' is very high with additional challenges presented by winter; more time inside, less daylight and sunshine, etc. Need to focus on community resilience.
- People moving indoors due to cold; more close contacts.
- Face coverings not being worn in private despite the fact that 95% report wearing masks when in public.
- Increased pressure on systems due to spike in case numbers. Increasing risk across communities.
- Seeing a growing trend towards family spread.
- Highly contagious nature of the virus is causing severe challenges for Long Term Care facilities.
- People are still reporting to work with mild symptoms, or with symptomatic family members.
- Gatherings continue in spite of recommendations by DCH not to gather.
- Still seeing an increase in testing time turnaround.
- Chamber of Commerce continue to receive lots of phone calls from businesses about financial assistance. **Abundant concerns at all levels about timely distribution of funds. Business funding need remains critical; businesses are struggling. Grants needed more than loans. Senator Murray's representative, John Culton, reports that efforts are underway at the federal level.**
- Many small counties are still waiting for CARES Act funding reimbursement; having to 'dig into' their own budget in the interim. Suggest future federal funding go directly to the local jurisdictions so that it does not get tied up at the state level.
- REDi Coalition reports that the rate of new COVID infections in the REDi service area is the highest on record. Current challenges related to capacity are stemming from staffing resources. **Enough beds, but not enough staff.** Staffed ICU and medical/surgical bed availability in eastern WA right now. Spokane catchment shows admissions at 13.7% COVID, up from 10.7% last week. Tri-cities admissions up to 11.6%, up from 10.5% last week. Wenatchee seeing vvtthrfiiekrjhfvreiibdfbrbjhvukndkcvringvib
- decrease in COVID admissions, down from 9.9% to 6.4%. in REDi catchment area, 336.6 new cases per 100K people in last two weeks. The R estimate on both sides of the state is 1.4, the highest rate eastern Washington has seen since March. Test positivity rate in eastern WA is 15.9%, highest on record since June.

4. Future operational plans (24, 48, and 72 hours out)



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- Emergency Management is activated at **Level 2 – Limited Operations** (virtual, with no face-to-face contact).
- WWEM acting as liaison to Washington National Guard (WNG).
- WWEM continued collection of donations.
- Coordination and communication with Unified Area Command State Emergency Operations Center (UAC SEOC). Unified Command SEOC conference call on Thursdays.
- Monitor WebEOC Resource Tracker for delivery of supplies from Washington State to Walla Walla County.
- WWEM submission of new resource requests on WebEOC.
- WWEM distribution of resources.
- DCH weekend staffing.
- Weekly ESF6 Human Services weekly conference calls.
- PSMMC maintaining daily sit reports.
- EMS providers tracking PPE use with CDC PPE Burn Rate Calculator.
- Continue work with the media.
- DCH case investigation/contact tracing of positive cases.
- Reopening Business Workgroup & Business/Economy meeting every Thursday.
- DCH and PSMMC are continuing to work with Washington State Department of Corrections for cases at Washington State Penitentiary. WNG is providing testing support. Currently seeing a spike in cases in the prison population.
- Washington National Guard deployed to assist with testing at LTC facility to meet CMS requirements.
- LTC facilities to continue to test based on CMS requirements to test if positivity rate is over 5%. **Currently testing twice weekly.** DCH working with LTC facilities to provide test kits and swabs.
- DCH and PSMMC Population Health continue to administer flu vaccine.
- DCH opting into the State's contact tracing to help mitigate stress on DCH staff caused by increase in cases. **Will be using them over Thanksgiving holiday.**
- PSMMC Urgent Care drive through testing operating with extended hours, 7AM – 6 PM.
- DCH working on community concerns around cohorting positive patients/staff to meet critical/crisis staffing shortages.
- Whitman College is moving forward with plans for spring semester opening; testing students upon arrival and then one week of isolation (PRC-based testing and rapid tests).
- DCH messaging emphasizing the importance of social distancing, masking, limiting gatherings.
- All testing sites will be closed on Thanksgiving.
- DCH ordered a 25-ft. ultracold freezer for potential storage of Pfizer COVID vaccine; delivery anticipated at the end of December.
- **DOH Vaccine Planning Partner call Tuesday, December 1st, 9-10:30**
- **Providence/DCH Vaccine Planning meeting Monday, November 23rd with Providence.**
- **Vaccine Advisory Committee has submitted a state plan; late December distribution planned for Tier 1a (healthcare workers, EMS first responders).**
- **LTC call with DOH to discuss Safe Start restrictions tomorrow, November 24th.**
- **LTC call with the State today to discuss possibility of staffing a COVID wing to assist the State.**
- **Chamber of Commerce working on a letter to House and Senate representatives requesting assistance for childcare industry and unemployed workers.**



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- [WA Exposure Notifications](#) app to go out this week. Assists with contact tracing and close contacts. It is an opt-in program. YouTube video explanation: <https://bit.ly/2J1fynk>

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COMMUNICATIONS:

- **Social Media/PIO/Media Requests:** eocpio@co.walla-walla.wa.us

ANTICIPATED NEEDS: Contact tracing and disease investigation

WHERE TO FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Phone Assistance:

- Washington State Department of Health: [800-525-0127](tel:800-525-0127), press #
- Walla Walla County Community Health Information line: [509-524-2647](tel:509-524-2647)

Web Site Information:

- HOLIDAYS: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>
- DCH <https://www.covidwwc.com/walla-walla-county>
- OHA Emerging Respiratory Disease page: www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus
- Washington Department of Health: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>
- CDC COVID-19 page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- CDC travel notice: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>
- WHO page: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/novel-coronavirus>

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DISTRIBUTED TO: Walla Walla County BOCC & Clerk of the Board; Providence St. Mary Medical Center Staff, Region 8 PHEPR-REPR, Benton-Franklin Health District, Umatilla Co. LHJ Director, Walla Walla County EMD and EMS & MPD, WA DOH Duty Officer, WA DOH LOFR; Klickitat LERC; Yakima LERC; Benton-Franklin LERC; Columbia Co. Director; REDi HCC, Columbia Co. LHJ, City of Walla Walla, City of College Place, City of Waitsburg, McMorris-Rogers Rep. Port of Walla Walla, and Health Office